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ON PAGE 1

NEW YORK TIMES
6 December 1981
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Former Intelligence Profiting From O

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 5 — Many former American intelligence agents have entered into profitable business arrangements based on the extraordinary secret access to foreign officials and to sensitive information they gained in Government service.

One former agent, for example, now represents an American company in an African country whose president he helped install in a covert operation backed by the Central Intelligence Agency. Another obtained a \$300,000 consulting contract because of his close relationship with the king of an Arab country that stemmed from confidential Government negotiations involving the two.

These and other examples were turned up through a review of records and interviews with dozens of officials and businessmen here and abroad.

Some American diplomats say the former agents can be a hindrance to American foreign policy, and businessmen who compete with the former agents say they have an unfair advantage.

The activities of the former agents have been placed in the spotlight by disclosures that Edwin P. Wilson and Frank E. Terpil used their intelligence connections in elaborate and, in some cases, illegal foreign business deals. They have been indicted for illegally shipping explosives to Libya for use in training terrorists. Both men are fugitives living abroad.

Different Kind of Revolving Door

Intelligence officials and Government prosecutors say they know of no other former agents who have committed such offenses. But for the first time, the C.I.A. is addressing questions about conflict of interest and revolving-door employment in the intelligence business, issues usually associated with officials who trade on their experience in the military or Government regulatory agencies.

The revolving door for covert intelligence agents is different from the one used by generals and lawyers, many officials say, because the former agents have had unusual and sometimes clandestine relationships with foreign leaders and access to sensitive intelligence information. Intelligence agents over the years have been able to maintain

connections with American intelligence agencies after they leave the Government.

Among the former agents who have used their foreign contacts and expertise for business purposes after leaving the Government are these:

Lawrence Raymond Devlin, the former C.I.A. station chief in Zaire. He covertly helped support President Mobutu Sese Seko's rise to power and then went to work in Zaire as the representative of an American metals company.

Raymond H. Close, the former C.I.A. station chief in Saudi Arabia. After offi-

Previous articles have reported on Edwin P. Wilson's recruitment of pilots and mechanics from the United States and Britain to fly and maintain planes for the Libyan Air Force, his attempt to sell restricted American computer technology to the Soviet Union, his amassing of a multimillion-dollar business empire, his use of Army Special Forces troops to train terrorists in Libya, evidence that investigators say links him to the attempted murder of a Libyan student in Colorado and charges that a company he controlled bribed a Federal official. The House Select Committee on Intelligence and the Justice Department are investigating.

cial retirement in 1977, he went to work there, and his numerous business interests include partnerships with former Saudi officials.

George C. Benson, the key defense intelligence attaché in Indonesia for nine years and the American with the closest ties to the Indonesian generals who took power in a 1965 coup. He is the Washington representative for Indonesia's state-owned oil company.

Vernon A. Walters, the former Deputy Director of Central Intelligence, now the Reagan Administration's ambassador at large. He earned \$300,000 for consulting on a potential arms sale to Morocco before joining the Administration.

Former and current State Department officials who said they were troubled by the foreign-policy implications of retired intelligence agents' continuing to do business in foreign countries frequently cited Mr. Devlin as an example.

After leaving the Government in 1974, Mr. Devlin became head of the Zaire office of Leon Tempelsman & Son Inc., a New York-based metals and precious minerals company active in diamond and mineral exploration in Zaire. William A. Ullman, a vice president of the diamond company, said the hiring of Mr. Devlin, who had no experience in diamonds or metals, took into account his "excellent contacts" in Zaire.

Government officials provided a fuller picture of Mr. Devlin's contacts. They said that President Mobutu regarded Mr. Devlin, even long after he left the Government, as the representative of the United States. This gave Mr. Devlin better connections in Zaire than the United States ambassador there, the officials said.

Stephen B. Cohen, a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Carter Administration who visited Zaire in 1979, said State Department officials there "believed that Devlin functioned as the true representative of the United States Government in President Mobutu's eyes."

Mr. Cohen added that it "was commonly believed by State Department officials in Zaire that Devlin had complete access to classified Government files long after he left the Government."

Mr. Stockwell said in his book that the C.I.A. continued to use Mr. Devlin in 1975, after he left the agency. One Congressional aide said that arrangement still existed.

Impact on American Policy

Former and current State Department officials said Mr. Devlin's extraordinary access caused intelligence officials in Zaire to regard him as more important than any other U.S. personnel.